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# HORACE TRACY PITKIN

MISSIONARY ADVOCATE  
AND MARTYR

*“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee  
the crown of life.”—Revelation 2: 10.*

By GEORGE SHERWOOD EDDY  
YALE, 1891 S.

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## I. THE LIFE IN OUTLINE

Pitkin was characterized by intense earnestness. In singleness of purpose and utter devotion to a great cause he was not surpassed by any man in his class, probably not by any in a generation at Yale. I do not wish to exaggerate his virtues or his talents, or to cover his faults. There is need of no covering and of no exaggeration. The lesson of his life was this: he was not an extraordinary man, yet by absolute devotion and intense earnestness he accomplished extraordinary results. When we read the lives of some men we despair, but this man spoke to all of us for he was one of us. He was no genius, he had no marked talent, yet he used to the full the talents he possessed. He was no paragon of virtue, he was not precocious, he could not "read Greek readily at five," nor for that matter at twenty-five. He was not especially popular or well known by his class, yet beyond all the men in Yale of his time he accomplished in twelve glorious years of crowded life what no other Yale man of his class will do in a lifetime. He was, as Speer says: "One who, loving the truth and scorning unreality, made it his meat and drink to do the will of God. . . . The supreme glory of Horace Pitkin's life was its exaltation of principle and duty into the supreme place. Not pleasure, nor ease, nor popularity, nor gain, but righteousness and service, were the dominant interests of his heart and

will, and these he followed though they led him under the shadow of the Cross."

Volunteering at Northfield at the close of his freshman year, he returned to Yale an obscure sophomore. He found in college no Volunteer Band, no missionary interest or activity. He left in Yale a Band of twenty-four student volunteers, many of them the strongest men in college. He kindled a missionary interest which has burned undimmed for twenty years. He started the missionary movement which led to the Yale Band, and later to the Yale Mission in China. Diffident and retiring, he yet roused the churches and Young People's Societies of Connecticut in missionary interest and raised \$5,000 for the Boards before he left college. Working tirelessly in the Grand Avenue Rescue Mission with tramps and drunkards, an organizer of the Boys' Clubs, which have since been so successful in New Haven, superintendent of the Bethany Mission Sunday School, an editor of the *Yale Courant*, a member of the Glee Club, and by dint of hard study rather than brilliance maintaining with all his outside work a high stand in college—this alone would make a record of which any Yale man might be proud.

But he did more than this. In Union Theological Seminary, New York, he became the natural leader of the Student Volunteer Band and of all the missionary activities of the Seminary. He raised up a score of the strongest men in the institution as volunteers, some of whom have since won distinction on the foreign field. He became the president of the New York Volunteer Union and leader of the student missionary interests of that great city. During his first year at Union, he roused the missionary interest



of churches in New York and Brooklyn. In the second year he carried the missionary message through the colleges of New England. In his third year, as traveling secretary of the Student Volunteer Movement through the Middle West, he raised up more than a hundred men who actually reached the foreign field, besides calling out such leaders in America as Harry Wade Hicks, Earl Taylor and others. Going to China as a self-supporting missionary, giving his life and money to the cause, he was cut down in the Boxer Uprising of 1900 before he had had time to win a single convert or even to learn the language at all fully. Yet the heroism of his death and the story of his last message have influenced thousands of students throughout China and have won many of them to enter the Christian life. It has furnished a unique and living illustration of the meaning and power of the Cross of Christ. It has led scores of men in America to enter missionary work, and he being dead yet speaketh. If such a man could accomplish such things in a few brief years, there must have been some deep meaning and message in his life. Let us try to find it.

## II. BEFORE ENTERING COLLEGE

Horace Tracy Pitkin was of the eighth generation in direct descent from William Pitkin, who came to New England in 1659. On his mother's side he was the lineal descendant of Thomas Yale, the founder of the Yale family in America, whose third son was Elihu Yale, the first governor in Madras, later governor of the East India Company in London, and the benefactor who gave his name to Yale College.

He was born in Philadelphia in a quiet little back street at 1824 DeLancy Place, on October 28, 1869. His mother died when he was eleven, and his father during his sophomore year in college, yet they left to the lonely boy a great heritage. His mother was a rare character, loving social life, conversation, study and travel. His father was of a strong religious nature, a good business man, a generous giver, and an earnest worker. Horace was healthy, active, strong, normal, natural and with plenty of faults. A remarkable mechanical bent early showed itself. He was always skillful with his hands, mending clocks, setting up a telephone system and printing a newspaper at twelve years of age.

After studying at the Rugby Latin School in Philadelphia, he entered Phillips Academy at Exeter, N. H., in 1884. He was a sensitive, high-bred, manly boy, "with the unconscious stamp of culture and true nobility in his address. His usually radiant face spoke of a happy disposition. At times he was the gayest of the gay, ready for any innocent mirth or frolic. At other times his look was serious beyond his years, with an added dreaminess of expression, as if his thoughts had carried him wholly out of himself. . . . He was fond of music and a good musician. 'A good all-round student,' possessing large means, he squandered nothing on personal vices." Here at Exeter at the age of sixteen he joined the church and from the first moment took an active part in the religious life of the school. In his senior year he became the president of the Christian Fraternity of Phillips, and was also president of the Golden Branch Literary Society, which was considered quite an honor. He always stood among the first five or ten in the class

in scholarship. During his senior year he went to Andover on a deputation sent by the Exeter Fraternity to visit the Society of Inquiry in the latter school, and the *Daily Philippian* speaks of the impression which he made at Andover. His college pastor at Exeter writes, "Of all the young men who have been under our church care here I can think of none who has been among us a more beautiful and helpful presence."

### III. PITKIN AT YALE

Pitkin entered Yale at the close of 1888. The writer was thrown with him from the beginning of the freshman year. The first impression I recall is that of his tremendous earnestness about the real things in life. While the rest of us were having a good time, he seemed to find something deeper in life from the start. He played an exceedingly good game of tennis, he took an active interest in football and rowing, and finally made the University Glee Club and one of the college papers. He did all this by faithful plodding and indomitable earnestness. Early in his course a pun became current among his friends who usually called him Pit—"If anybody kin, Pit-kin."

Pitkin was not what would be called a popular man in college. He was deeply sensitive, reserved and in the central depths of his heart he stood alone. The death of his mother, his sister and his father affected his sensitive nature more deeply than it would that of most men. This sensitiveness was covered frequently by a certain brusqueness of manner. Strong and pronounced in his convictions and positive in his assertion of what he believed to be right, he never stopped to



curry favor or seek popularity. He was not fully known or appreciated by his classmates, especially in the early years of his college course. Never an ascetic, he yet stood alone in his class against dancing, cards, the theater and smoking. His loneliness found expression, especially after his father's death, in his remarkable musical ability. He played with unusual expression and no man in college could equal him in improvising upon the piano.

My recollections of him in freshman year are very clear. I remember him as one of the most earnest men in the class. In his secret life, in his daily walk with God, in devotional Bible study, he was perhaps the most consecrated man in its membership. It was he, among the two thousand men in the university, who was first ready to hear God's call to the foreign field. The rest of us, I think, were not within calling distance. Each had his own ambitions and plans. He was the first to be ambitious for God and for His Kingdom. And, having yielded his own life, he became a tireless worker in college where he was. He did not postpone his life, but lived then.

At the close of freshman year, Pitkin attended for the first time the Northfield Student Conference, which exerted such a deep and abiding influence on his own life and upon many of the rest of us. He had had a vague purpose to enter the ministry and perhaps the foreign mission field, but here his purpose took final shape and he signed the Student Volunteer Declaration Card, which at that time read, "I am willing and desirous, God permitting, to be a foreign missionary." How he came to take this step he explained later in an article which he wrote for the *Student Volunteer* of February, 1896: "On Round



Top, at the Northfield Summer School of 1889, I signed the declaration. Why did I make this decision? Simply because I could not see why I shouldn't. The question came not, 'Why purpose to go?' but 'Why not purpose to go?' The presumption is in favor of foreign missions. As I saw nothing that stood in the way of my accepting the challenge, I did accept it, believing that God had used my reasoning powers to that end. I had just finished my freshman year at Yale. Of course at that time I had no conception of the great advantages of an early decision which confront the student to-day. But thanks be to God, in spite of all my crudeness, He did use the decision."

Upon returning to college at the beginning of his sophomore year, though an obscure man, he began with characteristic earnestness and indomitable determination to work for the great cause to which he had given his life. He left a lasting impress on many of the leading men of his time in college and kindled a missionary fire which has never gone out in Yale. A man of action rather than of thought, though a faithful and conscientious student, he devoted himself to men rather than to books, to personal relationships rather than to abstract theories. Many men have testified to his influence upon them.

Pitkin's roommate the latter half of his course was Mr. D. T. Huntington, now Bishop in Anking, China. Bishop Huntington speaks of him as follows: "Of all the blessings of my college course, I count my intimacy with him as by far the greatest. As a student he was not remarkable. Neither was he an athlete. He was strong and played a good game of tennis. Football and baseball and rowing he was moderately fond of and did moderately well. He was fond of

sailing. In music he was much better. He had a good tenor voice and sang with considerable feeling. In the class prayer meetings he was a leader in every way. I should say that he was the best speaker among us, for he had a good deal of the orator in him and was on fire with the love of God.

“A work of which I had an intimate knowledge was the Grand Avenue Mission. There for two years, nearly every Sunday night and sometimes during the week, we went. I know that some of those men throughout all eternity will thank God that Horace Pitkin showed them the way to life.

“But the matter in which he was most interested and to which he gave the most time and thought outside the regular course of studies was foreign missions. The Yale Volunteer Band was one of the most energetic organizations I have ever known, and Horace was its leading spirit.

“And I must not forget Northfield. How we planned and worked for those Northfield meetings! Everything, from swimming in the river and tennis and baseball and Fourth of July celebrations and a water fight with two young freshmen who dared to disregard our seniority, to the glorious meetings in the Hall or on Round Top, and the little meetings for prayer in private rooms or in the woods, and the personal work for volunteers—all came to him naturally and joyfully.

“But back of these somewhat vague reminiscences stands out a man whom I cannot draw—straight, strong, with a clear eye and sensitive mouth, whether in fun or in earnest, always doing with his might what he had found to do. Perhaps that was his most striking characteristic. He was no faultless saint. I

have known more gentle, more lovable men, greater scholars, deeper thinkers, but never have I known any one with such power of translating faith into action. With him to believe was to do."

One of the leading missionaries to-day in all China is Mr. E. C. Lobenstine, who was chosen unanimously as their secretary when all the Missions wished to unite in a national organization. Of Pitkin's influence he writes as follows: "My recollections of Horace are as leader of the Volunteer Band. There were fifteen or twenty, most of them seniors, and Horace was the center and soul of the group. His deep earnestness and whole-souled devotion to the great cause to which he had given his life impressed me powerfully. I had never before met a young man whose consecration to the work of the Master was so entire. Something of the unbounded admiration and reverence that the average freshman has for the captain of the 'Varsity football team in the fall of freshman year I had for him; something of the same pride at having him walk across the Campus with me, or invite me to his room."

It is unnecessary to add to the above list of names many who could tell what Pitkin did for them in college. Like a silent and unobtrusive Andrew, he raised up many a Simon Peter to enter the world's work and to achieve large things. His four years in Yale counted for time and eternity, for the college and for after life, for students, for drunkards in the Mission, for boys in the Sunday school and clubs in New Haven, for men in America and in China. He passed this way but once, but he did things.



#### IV. AT UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

After finishing college he entered Union Theological Seminary in New York in the fall of 1892. Here again he threw himself in with tremendous earnestness to rouse and deepen the missionary spirit in the Seminary. Before six months had passed a "missionary revival" had begun. Luce and I were with him in Union and we three roomed close together in one end of the second floor. In Union Seminary his influence was always stronger for missions than that of any man in the institution. He was busy day and night planning for meetings in the Seminary itself, or in the churches in the city. During this time I was not clear in my own purpose to go to the foreign field. I was interested in missions. I hoped to go, and I thought probably I would do so some day. But while uncertain myself, I saw I was neither influencing other men to go, nor working in the churches to arouse interest and solicit funds. But there was Pitkin working night and day, a strong and positive influence for missions among the men in the Seminary, and pressing the claims of the non-Christian world before the churches all over the city. God knew the plan for my life, then why should not I? Pitkin's life was to me the unanswerable proof that God could guide and was an example of the possibilities of service open to any one who knew God's will. I remember the night I went up to Pitkin's room and told him that I felt I must know God's will for my life. After prayer together, I went to my own room, and without excitement or very much emotion I waited quietly and asked God to guide me surely and unmistakably. He did. The simple conviction came that it was His will that I should go. And from that moment no



shadow of a doubt ever came. That week Luce and I decided, and from that time we three planned and prayed for the cause that became dearer than life to all of us.

I remember as we went down for exercise in the old gym., after grinding away at Hebrew and Greek all day, how the missionary purpose gave zeal even to our exercise; and as we did our mile together, or had a round or two of boxing, the thought often was: "We must put on muscle for China. This will carry the Gospel many a mile out there." How little we knew then that for dear Horace, the strongest of the three, the race would be so short and the martyr crown so near. Short as was his life, I never knew him to waste a moment of it. A sentence in the life of Mackay of Uganda impressed him much, "I must be more terribly in earnest where I am, knowing that I must so soon go elsewhere." And more fully than Mackay, before he sailed, his own life fulfilled these words. He might have sung, even had he never reached China, "To-morrow do thy worst, for I have lived to-day."

After arousing the missionary interest in the Seminary, Pitkin turned his attention to the churches of New York City and Brooklyn in order to arouse them to their obligation in giving. What he preached, however, he practiced. Mr. David McConaughy, who was the national secretary of the Young Men's Christian Associations in India, was supported by Pitkin and one other classmate. The paper which he read before the Annual Convention of the Inter-Seminary Mission Alliance at Auburn, New York, in 1892, on "Systematic and Proportionate Giving" shows both the conviction and practice of his own life in this matter.

During the second year of his seminary course he was invited by John R. Mott, together with his two associates in Union, to visit the colleges of New England and New York, going out each Saturday and Sunday. During the following year Pitkin, Luce and myself were the three traveling secretaries of the Student Volunteer Movement. Luce took the colleges of the South, I those of the East and Canada, and Pitkin took the Middle West. During the year he visited the important institutions in all the states from Ohio to Colorado and from North Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan, south to Kansas. These Western colleges, which have been the strength of the missionary movement from the beginning, fell to Pitkin. And it was providential. He was not only able to secure more volunteers than any of us, but also to use his gifts for organization in the field which then most needed it and could best carry out his methods and suggestions. During the first half of the year, we separated and worked apart. After Christmas we came together again for the campaigns in Chicago, New York and Philadelphia. I shall not forget hearing him in the last city. It was evident that something had happened and that there had been a definite transaction between his soul and God. It was made evident that the Spirit of God was upon him by the presence of Jesus Christ Himself in all that he said and did. It was a mass meeting of students, and though it was already late, he held the entire audience with great power. Nor was the blessing only temporary. From that time on there was more fruit in his work in the colleges. I remember his showing me a few months afterwards his notebook in which he had prayed for men by name

even in the colleges he had visited before he received this anointing of the Spirit. Man after man had decided and given his life to God and the mission field, long after he had left the college, as a direct result of his work and prayer. It was a rebuke and a lesson to see the power of his prayer life, in its capacity and wide sympathy, as he kept in his grasp his whole "back track."

In all his work, Pitkin was extremely practical and accomplished definite results. In many colleges he started a missionary alcove in the library, organized a mission study class, induced the students to raise some definite sum toward the support of a foreign missionary, reorganized the Student Volunteer Band, helped the students to start a campaign for speaking on missions in the churches, and besides all this won many a man to enter the foreign missionary service. Mr. Speer says: "Pitkin left an ineffaceable imprint upon scores and hundreds of students from New England to the Rocky Mountains. He revealed higher ideals and he brought more divine power to many young men and women beginning their serious living; and all over the world, at home and abroad, are those who owe to him their chief impulse to a wider service." Mr. Harry Wade Hicks, the able secretary of the Missionary Education Movement, writes: "It was through Mr. Pitkin that I first became interested in foreign missions. He followed me to my room one evening after a meeting, at about eleven o'clock on the campus. I have always dated my positive interest, which has led me to my present place, from the hour of that interview."

After this year of service in the colleges, Pitkin offered himself to the American Board to go to the



field as a self-supporting missionary. Desiring, however, to have the backing of some church which might help him in prayer, while he could arouse in them the missionary spirit and thus form a living link with the field, as the Apostle Paul had done with the churches of Antioch and Jerusalem centuries before, Pitkin offered himself as the representative of the Pilgrim Church in Cleveland, Ohio, of which the Rev. Charles S. Mills, D.D., was pastor. In this church he was ordained on May 6, 1896.

Just before his ordination he married Miss Letitia E. Thomas of Troy, Ohio, of Mount Holyoke College. At the time of his engagement Pitkin wrote to Rev. Oliver Bronson of his class: "Dear Oliver: It's all broke out in the seminary. Not the smallpox—oh, no, my son!—but the fact that I am engaged to Miss L. E. Thomas of Troy, Ohio. I'll tell you all about her when I see you—but let this cheer your heart and make you well quick. See!"

## V. MISSIONARY LIFE IN CHINA

On November 11, 1896, Pitkin sailed with his wife for China. Among his fellow passengers were Dr. and Mrs. Jacob Chamberlain of India. He planned to study mission work on the way to the field, and after visiting Paris, Rome, Greece, Palestine and Egypt, sailed for India. Here he studied the mission work in Tinneveli and Madura, in Agra and Delhi, Lucknow, Benares and Calcutta. The writer met him at Ahmednagar, where he was spending two weeks with the Rev. Robert Hume, D.D., one of the old Yale men who has been carrying on such efficient work in Western India.



He arrived in China, May 7, 1897, and at the end of the summer went to his station at Paotingfu, south of Peking, in Chihli Province, which is the empire state of China, with some nineteen millions of people. Paotingfu was the capital of the province and a city of strategic importance. It is surrounded by a magnificent city wall twenty or thirty feet high, and several miles in circumference.

During this year, on March 29, 1898, his son, Horace Collins Pitkin, was born. The year following, events began to thicken and the crisis in China's history approached. The feeble young Emperor, under the influence of enthusiastic reformers, began to issue his revolutionary edicts in rapid succession, endeavoring to reform China on paper. The Dowager Empress, backed by the conservatives, took the young Emperor prisoner and instituted the reactionary movement in the vain endeavor to stay the tide of reform which was sweeping over the land. During these stirring days Pitkin had passed his first examination in Chinese, and took his first trip, itinerating in the country with his fellow worker, Mr. Ewing, of Yale Theological Seminary, and the able young pastor, Mêng, whom Mr. Beach, his former teacher, said would be among the first two or three scholars in any class in a college in the United States.

Early in 1900 the storm clouds of the Boxer Uprising began to darken the horizon. All the forces of conservatism, of superstition and reaction gathered for the final effort to resist the advancing tide of progress and of foreign influence. Many were the grievances which China had suffered. France had seized Saigon and Cochin China; Belgium had outwitted China; Spain had butchered 20,000 Chinese in

cold blood in the Philippines; England held Hongkong and Weihaiwei; Russia had seized half a million square miles of her territory; the Germans held Kiauchau and were pressing into sacred Shantung; Portugal had long before taken Macao. The foreign religion was making rapid advances, and the Chinese deeply resented the political influence which the Roman Catholics were bringing to bear in the courts and at provincial capitals. The superstition of the common people attributed the drought and hard times to the presence of the "foreign devils." The secret societies, called Boxers, were drilling and performing their incantations which were supposed to make them invulnerable. Believing in their pretentious claims, the Empress Dowager secretly encouraged them and finally issued an edict to kill the foreigners and drive them from the country.

Pitkin, although he had not yet passed his second examination in the language, had taken over, in the absence of some of his missionary colleagues then in America, all the work of the station. He was not unmindful of the danger that was threatening in the Boxer Uprising. "Bob" Gailey, the Princeton center rush, who is the Young Men's Christian Association secretary in Peking and whom Pitkin had nursed through typhoid fever, says of Pitkin at this time: "There was more than the ordinary far-away look in his eyes as we saw him for what proved to be the last time. He was quiet and thoughtful, and the laugh was more or less mechanical. It was so noticeable in him, for he was always just the opposite. . . . It was unmistakable that the responsibilities as well as the possibilities of what was awaiting him in Paotingfu

were weighing on his mind then, but there was nothing but clear obedience to his duty."

In his letter to Pilgrim Church of May 7, Pitkin writes explaining the reasons which had decided his wife's return to America: "Our cramped quarters and other conditions have told on Mrs. Pitkin's health to such an extent that we feel only the rest of some months in Ohio will completely restore her. There's only one objection to it—it will take away from our heads the halos that some of you have persisted in placing there, and you will be disappointed in finding us to be 'just like common folks.' 'Huh! nothing particularly like martyrdom in this foreign work!' you will say. And you're right. We don't believe in martyrs either."

## VI. THE BOXER UPRISING

All the years that we had been separated, the Yale '92 missionaries—Whittemore in Korea, Lasell and Leveritt in Hainan, Keller, Luce, Lobenstine, Evans, Bishop Huntington and Pitkin in China, myself in India, and one or two others—had kept hold of hands in a "round-robin" letter. We all greatly prize now the last letter written by Horace on April 27, 1900, when the storm had already broken and retreat was cut off on all sides. The old fearless and rollicking spirit shows to the last. He wrote as follows:

"Five sheets (and no pillow-case).

"PAOTINGFU, April 27, 1900.

"Well, you fellows may think I am not worth keeping on the list of respectability—and perhaps I am



not. Mrs. Pitkin and Horace have gone off and left me here for seven months. My colleague here, Ewing, goes off for the summer to the shore, so I must take my turn and look after things here. The Gaileys (Y. M. C. A. secretary at Tientsin) will have our house, and if I get a few weeks, I'll board with them. Dr. Hodge, of Philadelphia, will be right next door—so we shall have a merry party.

“We're getting the rumors of war here all right. You know these wretched ‘Boxer’ or ‘Big Sword Society’ troubles in Shantung have been making life miserable all winter. The Society has a fixed purpose to root out all foreign devils and exterminate their religion and converts. From plundering Christians, they advanced to whole villages. Our stations in Shantung at times have been in hourly peril, but now the worst is over and in the ‘unquiet quiet’ they are trying to start their station schools again. The whole thing has been under secret patronage from Peking, using the Boxers as cat's-paws. Lately, the movement has been spreading up into our province until we are surrounded. . . . Now, only fifteen miles from here, Boxers are assembling in great numbers and though watched by a handful of troops, are bound to sack a big Roman Catholic station near by, then another and then Paotingfu. Where we come in on this deal is not easy to see. At present the city sends us fifteen soldiers a night for our guard. Warships are at Tientsin, but if any troops should be landed, it would be too hot for us here at once. Now we are only 200 miles from the coast by railroad if haste should be necessary. I'm awfully sorry I haven't got time to tack valuable and instructive notes, annotations, etc., on the backs of you fellows' letters (as



Eddy does). I must leave that to one worthier than I. Ah, well, I remember that expressive gesture each time the cap of his ubiquitous fountain pen came off. It was a shame—that typewriter—to spoil the temper of one—‘Don’t bother me, Harry,—can’t you see I am writing a Bible Reading on “peace”?’ You ought to have seen ‘whiskers’ [Bishop Huntington] this summer—sitting on our porch at Peitaiho, drinking tea, cracking stories and singing the same weird melodies as of yore! I hope to see Loby this summer—and the rest of you? Now for our work. Language still. Oh, to be in India (like Eddy) a Y. M. C. A.-ing! I have the Boys’ Boarding School to run, and though I haven’t preached yet, I’ve helped in communion services and baptisms. . . .

“Here—here—I must stop. It’s after midnight, and I may have some of my sentences sent ringing down the ages with blue underlining. ‘What lady done that?’ The Lord be with you all, boys. He has been very good to me—and I thank Him.”

In his last letter to the Pilgrim Church, May 9, 1900, about ten days after he had written to us, Horace wrote as follows: “What of our situation here! The Boxers openly practice their incantations, dancing and sword practice. . . . One of the Empress Dowager’s edicts calls the Boxers only patriotic sons, drilling for self-defense, and demands that they be protected. This is one of the sample edicts that laugh at the Great Nations’ representatives in Peking. God only knows the end! . . .

“I write this, not to say that we are in danger—for I don’t believe that we are—but only to ask you to pray that the door of escape may soon be opened and

our work go on in quietness once more. His Kingdom come—on earth as it is in Heaven! May the Spirit's gift of the Lenten season paint more and more deeply in our hearts the Life Portrait of the Son of God!"

In the last letters to his wife, the following statements shed an added light on the situation in those last days. "May 16th. The fight a few miles from the village of Ting Hsing was told me to-day. The Boxers came down on the village, surrounded the houses of the Roman Catholics as they were pointed out to them, and then robbed them, allowing no one to escape. Finally they fired the houses, and as the people rushed out from the flames, they were killed and thrown back into the fire. Only one man escaped and they pursued him. He jumped into a well and so they fired their guns into the well and threw down bricks until, thinking him dead, they left. He managed to get out and started for Paotingfu. The Roman Catholics were absolutely wiped out, thirty or more. Everywhere we hear they are not interfering with or molesting the Protestants. It is paying off old scores with the Catholics. I do not like to leave the compound without a man here. In the present state of affairs I think I shall favor giving up the July meeting here."

The final letter was sent by Horace to his American associates in Peking. It was written on the morning of June 2, 1900, and was carried through the Boxer lines by a Chinese runner. "Mêng came in this noon and told us something of outside affairs. The fate of the French party [of Belgian engineers] seems uncertain. They left in spite of the protest of the officials—thirty in all, eleven boats with three soldiers to a boat. Surrounded in shallow water, they used all of their

ammunition, killed a great many, were finally overpowered and all massacred. It may be the beginning of the end now. God rules and somehow His Kingdom must be brought about in China. The way is blocked by river and train. The railroad to the south is broken, bridges burned and wires cut. North of us is one band of plunderers, east on the river another, south another. As for Paotingfu, Boxers drill in temples in the city and officials are powerless. What our chances are, it is hard to tell. A firebrand from north, east, south, or west will be sufficient, that's sure. So we send this note to you. In the meantime we may not be left to see the end. It's a grand cause to die in. 'Jesus shall reign,' but we do hope a long life may be for us in this work. We write to give you the facts, inasmuch as you may have no authentic information. . . . Rumors increasing in the city say the Roman Catholic church in Nan Chuang will be burned; then the cathedral here, and then we come last, Protestants and Catholics alike. Dry as powder—oppressive dust-storm. God give us rain! That should quiet things for the moment. 'I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.' I know I shall up there. Down here, may He help me also to see it. The moon gets brighter every night—and—what—then! God leads—thank God, He does! We can't go out to fight—we have no soldiers to trust—a guard of ten or so, who will vanish as the mist. We must sit still, do our work, and take quietly whatever is sent us. And it will be but a short time before we can know definitely whether we can serve Him better above or not. Perhaps you are all in great distress. But make one more appeal to Conger for Paotingfu. We cannot



be sure of a single day's life. Work and pray for us. Pray for rain."

## VII. THE STORY OF THE END

It was fitting that Horace's friend, the Rev. J. Walter Lowrie, D.D., a Princeton man and one of the most princely missionaries in China, should have been the one to tell the story of the end. He was prevented from being in his old station of Paotingfu himself at the time, but came with the German troops on the punitive expedition and by his intercession saved the city. On June 11, Pitkin telegraphed to Mr. Lowrie in Latin a message which was translated as follows: "The provincial treasurer not willing to protect. Others are. Our only hope is that the viceroy orders General Nieh to send soldiers. Six thousand Boxers are at the village of Tung Lü besieging the Roman Catholics. They wish to fight to-day. If they conquer, they will come over (against us). Immanuel."

Dr. Lowrie says: "I made every effort to induce a foreign relief force to march to Paotingfu. But the reply always came that the force (American) was too small. How beautifully the word 'Immanuel' shines from the background of carnage and hate. He was their stay through that month of deepening danger and evidently was with Mr. Pitkin on the night before he was translated.

"Many of the missionaries were absent from home, leaving a total of fifteen persons, eleven adults, five of whom were women, and four children. In the American Presbyterian Mission, north of the city, were Dr. Taylor and Mrs. Simcox and three children and Dr. and Mrs. Hodge. In the American Board



Mission were Mr. Pitkin, Miss Morrill and Miss Gould. In the China Inland Mission were Mr. and Mrs. Bagnall, their little girl, Gladys, and Mr. Cooper.

“On the 24th of June appeared the ferocious edict, fuming with hate, calling for the extinction of foreigners and demolition of their property, and with it the Boxers received the last impulse to their hellish purpose. On the afternoon of Thursday, the 28th of June, while Pastor Mêng of the Congregational Mission was packing the books in the street chapel within the city preparatory to removing everything and sealing up the premises, he was suddenly seized, bound and carried off to the temple by the Boxers. Mr. Pitkin sent his card to the police court to secure his release but in vain. And after a night of suffering, he was beheaded and buried behind the temple in a ditch. On the day of Pastor Mêng’s arrest, Dr. Taylor had made his regular visit to the city dispensary on the north street. Some native college men, frequent patients of his, came in a body and with weeping eyes confessed their inability to help him. Dr. Taylor shed tears with them for a moment, then recovering himself bade them good-bye, closed the dispensary door with his accustomed self-control, and returned with peaceful countenance to sustain the hearts of the younger missionaries at his home. He never betrayed the slightest fear during those trying days, but with amazing cheerfulness refreshed and diverted the minds of the two ladies and strengthened the courage of his two male comrades.

“On the afternoon of the 30th of June, a mob, composed of Boxers and a disorderly rabble, bent on pillage, came by a circuitous route from the city to the American Presbyterian Mission premises. They

piled cornstalks against the doors of the compound and soon had them in flames. The natives in the compound were either killed or driven to leap into a well, while the foreigners with a rifle and shotgun held the crowd at bay from the windows of the house of Mr. Simcox, where they had fled together. The leading Boxer was killed, but finally the crowd succeeded in firing the house itself, and all the inmates perished in the flames, Mr. Simcox being seen hand in hand with his two little sons walking to and fro as the flames enveloped them. Dr. Taylor had remonstrated with the crowd from the window, pleading the deeds of kindness that they had all wrought so fully for the people, but it was unavailing, and the party passed together from their far-away funeral pyre up into the reward of those who have left houses and lands for His sake and the Gospel's.

"The report of this foul deed flew over the city like wildfire and the workers south of the city could but prepare for the worst. Mr. Pitkin prayed with the Chinese teacher of the Girls' School, then wrote a letter to his wife, one to the soldiers, whom he rightly believed would eventually come to avenge the deed, and one to his missionary brethren, and with a faithful attendant, not a professing Christian, but a Christian in heart, buried these letters in two places in the out-houses behind his residence. He then returned to the house, prayed with Lao-man the faithful, and left him one parting word, 'Lao-man,' said he, 'tell the mother of little Horace to tell Horace that his father's last wish was that when he is twenty-five years of age he should come to China as a missionary.' Lao-man, at Mr. Pitkin's wish, then leaped over the wall and escaped through the night. Next morning, early,

on the 1st of July through a pouring rain, their compound was attacked front and back, and Miss Morrill and Miss Gould, who lived in the rear, fled forward to the chapel, a large building near the house occupied by Mr. Pitkin. He bravely went out and tried to intimidate the crowd by firing his revolver, but they burst in the gate very soon and as seems true, aided by the Imperial soldiery, pursued him toward the chapel, whither he retired with Miss Morrill and Miss Gould. Through the windows of this building, he held the crowd at bay until ammunition was exhausted; then they leaped through a rear window of the church into the school yard and took refuge in a small room there. From this room Mr. Pitkin and the two ladies were taken, and there he suffered death by the sword, which severed his head from his body. He had with Christian chivalry and loyalty done his utmost for the ladies committed as it were to his care. The young ladies were rudely seized by the brutal crowd, Miss Morrill by her hair, which was loosened and flowing; Miss Gould became powerless with excitement and fell motionless to the ground. There her hands were bound together and her feet in front of her body and a pole thrust through between her face and the bound hands and feet, upon which she was slung and borne into the city to the temple Chi-shêng-an. Miss Morrill exhorted the people as she walked along and even gave some silver to a poor creature in the crowd; her ruling passion, sympathy, and her ruling trait, self-effacement, were strong in these final hours. Mr. Pitkin's head seems to have been taken into the city to the Nieh-tai's (or provincial judge's) yamen by the Imperial soldiers, but after-



wards was probably given the Boxers, who are said to have offered it at the shrine of their god.

“Such is the brief record of those fatal days. The city has since been punished, the provincial judge beheaded, the Manchu commandant and the dastardly colonel also. The gate towers and the corner wall towers and a portion of the wall have been blown up, the Boxer temples destroyed, and the Gentry fined one hundred thousand taels. By a striking coincidence, the Nieh-tai and commandant and colonel were imprisoned in the very rooms where Dr. Taylor, their victim, had for years relieved the sickness of the citizens of Paotingfu and where the Gospel had been preached continuously for six or seven years.

“‘What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.’ There is yet hope for Paotingfu. The very consciousness of this crime may work a spirit of penitence which it has always been impossible by common means to produce. At all events, the prayers of God’s true people must have as a keynote the Redeemer’s prayer, ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.’ ”

I visited the spot where Pitkin’s body was found in a pit with nine other bodies of the Chinese Christians whom he had loved and whom he laid down his life to serve. His hands were uplifted as if in prayer and in that position had become rigid. “The character of the life had set in permanence.” The words of the faithful Chinese Lao-man, the old letter carrier and general servant who was with Pitkin at the last moments, should be added. He said:

“I was a long time with Pastor Pitkin. He was composed and calm. He took out a letter he had just written to Mrs. Pitkin and his camera and said: ‘You



go with me and we will bury these things in the ground under the dovecote, so when all is over you will know where to find them. Send or take them to the soldiers from the West, or whoever comes with them, so that my wife may be sure to receive them.' We went out, dug quite a deep hole and put them carefully in, wrapped in waterproof covers. Then we went back to the pastor's room and talked till midnight. At last, Mr. Pitkin said, 'Do not risk your life any longer but get over the wall in some place as retired as may be and get into hiding before dawn. My letter may be found and destroyed. If you learn that it is, send word to Mrs. Pitkin that God was with me and His peace was my consolation. Tell her that when Horace is twenty-five years old, I hope he will come to China to preach the Gospel in my place.' Then we knelt down and prayed together and he sent me away."

Nine months after the massacre, on Sunday, March 24, 1901, a unique international funeral was held for the martyr missionaries. The German troops under General Von Kettler, with many German and French officers who had come to relieve the foreigners and punish the city, were present at the funeral. The highest Chinese officials in the city attended the service. There were five bands, the German, French and three Chinese. The great crowd was wonderfully quiet. The German band played "A Mighty Fortress is Our God." Mr. Lowrie and Dr. Wherry conducted the service. In English all sang:

Asleep in Jesus, far from thee,  
Thy kindred and their graves may be,  
But thine is still a blessed sleep  
From which none ever wake to weep.

Then they sang in Chinese:

Light after darkness, gain after loss,  
Strength after weakness, Crown after Cross.  
Sweet after bitter, hope after fears,  
Home after wandering, praise after tears.

The great funeral deeply impressed the people of the city as the martyred dead were honored by this great international company. A splendid memorial stands over the graves of the Presbyterian missionaries at the north of the city, while Pitkin's grave stands in a long line marked by a white stone, one of a score or more, among the martyrs that fell in the American Board's Mission. On the stone are the words in Chinese: Pastor Pitkin. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

Rev. Chauncey Goodrich, D.D., says of Pitkin: "He was a block of granite covered with flowers. He impressed me as having a bed rock of firmness and strength, united with remarkable gentleness, sweetness and sensitiveness. He seemed to have given China his best and his all. Oh! my blessed brother! I could hardly have it so, that you should receive the fiery baptism and be caught away when so in love with life, and with your great life work but beginning. And now as I sit half dumb, I wonder if some other sons of wealth may catch your spirit of sacrifice and with hearts that leap with joy at the privilege, make a like consecration of time and strength and money, and all, to the highest, the most difficult and the most blessed work on the planet."

After the memorial service held in Dwight Hall the *Yale Alumni Weekly* of November 28, after referring to this service, speaks editorially of the foot-

ball season, following Yale's victory over Harvard: "A great many things are impossible in life, but the man who spends much time in thinking about the impossibilities that lie in his path is going to add to them rather than detract from them; and the man who believes that nothing is impossible if it is in the line of his duty, reduces and sometimes altogether blots out the list of those things that men say cannot be done. Yale teams have been different from other teams, principally from the belief that nothing which was set before them was impossible. We sincerely hope that this season has brought back that feeling into Yale efforts on field, on river, on platform, and that it will again become a part of the Yale man's theory of life."

Pitkin played the game and won. On the greater team in the game of life, who among all the graduates of Yale showed more of Yale "sand"? He had fought a good fight, he had kept the faith, he had finished the course; henceforth—a crown. In the four short years at Yale, in the four years of postgraduate preparation and service, in the four years during his journey to and work on the field, what Yale man crowded more into life?

Perhaps we can agree that the intangible "Yale spirit" consists in discipline, democracy and the determination to win; the discipline of strict conformity to the unwritten law of Yale tradition; the democracy of a broad social unity and equality; the determination to win that has shown itself in the Yale pluck of the athletic field, the *esprit de corps* of unity, coöperation and team play that has spurred on every Yale man to fight to the finish in college and in the big battle of life. Surely Pitkin had this Yale spirit, and of



him we are all proud. More than three thousand men to-day tread the same walks, live in the same dormitories, study in the same classrooms. Is there any message more needed by the students of to-day than this of Pitkin's life? He lived in desperate earnest for his Master, rather than for the favor of man, for eternity as well as time. He lived his life to the full for God, for his adopted country and for Yale. Let us play the game.